

Asheville City Council  
Planning and Economic Development Committee

5:30 p.m. February 13, 2008  
Economic Development Office Conference Room

Minutes

Present: Councilman Jan Davis, Chair; Mayor Terry Bellamy, Council members Robin Cape, Holly Jones, Bill Russell and Brownie Newman; Staff members: Sam Powers, Julia Cogburn, Shannon Tuch, Blake Esselstyn, Nikki Gunter; City Manager Gary Jackson; Bob Oast

Guests: Leicester residents Alan Ditmore, Peggy Bennett, Edward Parham, Charlie Broster, Pat Cothran, Freida Burrell; Joe Masters

The Planning and Economic Development Committee met on February 13, 2008 at 29 Haywood Street at 5:30 p.m. Chair Jan Davis called the meeting to order.

The first order of business was to announce that at the February 19, 2008 City Council meeting, Council appointed Councilwoman Cape, Councilman Bill Russell, and Vice Mayor Jan Davis to the Planning and Economic Development committee. The three council members decided that Councilwoman Robin Cape would be the new chair.

Also, Bob Oast clarified the role of the other City Council members present at the meeting; that they were there as observers; that deliberations would involve committee members only.

**1. Approval of Minutes**

Both the January 9, 2008 (regular meeting) and the January 23, 2008 (called meeting with Leicester residents), minutes were approved as written.

**2. New Business**

**Leicester Incorporation**

Blake Esselstyn, Planning department, presented the following information.

Figures related to potential Town of Leicester boundaries:

All areas in square miles:

Total area of Leicester Township minus Woodfin	66.1
Area removed by January 23 <sup>rd</sup> proposal	27.3
Area removed by February 13 <sup>th</sup> proposal	2.7
Remaining area	36.1

Planning staff explained that available infrastructure, population density, quality of the roads and natural boundaries were the criteria used in determining potential for annexation. They also use the philosophy of the state, which is that what is urban should be municipal.

Leicester residents clarified that their intention was to submit incorporation papers to the State, and it would strengthen their application to have a resolution in support of their application from the City. Discussion then revolved around crafting an agreement between the City and Leicester indicating spheres of influence for each entity, which would support each community's right to logical and healthy boundaries. Bob Oast shared that similar discussions are taking place at this time with Woodfin. Councilwoman Cape expressed her interest in having the details of the discussions with Woodfin, and how it fits with the Leicester incorporation, brought forward at a future meeting.

Leicester resident Charlie Broster voiced his opinion that there are Leicester residents who do not see a need for incorporation; that it is expensive and problematic, and that he feels adequately represented by the County Commissioners.

Pat Cochran, representing Leicester residents in support of incorporation, indicated that they were not ready to accept the City's suggestion as to the size of their incorporation at this time, as she had just seen the map of the new proposal earlier in the afternoon. She requested more discussion at the March PED meeting, which would give the Planning department time to give her larger maps, with road names, and the City data used for the new map in writing for the Leicester residents to examine and discuss.

Councilman Davis expressed his thanks to the Leicester residents for attending the meeting, so that everyone more fully understand each group's needs.

**3. Presentations**

None.

**4. Updates**

None.

**5. Public Comment**

Joe Masters expressed his concern that the Board of Adjustments is too confrontational, and gave a detailed explanation of his concerns citing a pending case, and suggested possible solutions to his concerns. Mr. Oast explained that the Board of Adjustments is a statutory body, and, as such, is an optional Board. It was established as a safety valve by which citizens can ask for interpretation of a decision made by the Planning department. Once it is established, by NC State Statutes, it cannot be changed. Discussion ensued amongst staff and Council as to the rules, terms and how the Board of Adjustments functions. Planning staff was charged with coordinating a retreat or Council session to

review the concerns presented by Mr. Masters, who will rewrite his recommendations to better serve the purpose of his proposal. This would be a public meeting. Issues addressed at the retreat, including but not limited to, would be how the Board of Adjustment members are appointed, how it is set up, and where its oversight lies. Council could then charge the Board of Adjustments with evaluating themselves.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.